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The occurrence of this particular error exemplifies the 'irony of fate.' Among the forty terms on the list this is the only one to which my own conversion was recent. For years I used *conarium* without variation. The change was due to four considerations: 1. The arguments of Prof. H. F. Osborn and Dr. E. C. Spitzka. 2. The recognition of the desirability of verbal correlation with the ventral extension, hypophysis ('*corpus pituitarium*') and the other dorsal outgrowth, paraphysis. 3. The fuller appreciation of the force of Dr. W. H. Dall's declaration, "The human mind wearies of too many names and much more readily assimilates a new meaning for an old one."* 4. The abandonment, or rather relaxation, of one of the requirements of technical terms which was enunciated twenty-five years ago, viz., 'independence of context for signification.'† It is hardly conceivable that any misapprehension should arise from the employment of one and the same word, *epiphysis*, for a part of the brain and for the end of a long bone.

Permit me to express the hope that journals that republished your article may likewise print the corrective portion of this letter, and also to state that the next number of the *Journal of Comparative Neurology* will contain an extended commentary upon the report of the Neurological Association, together with correspondence on the general subject between Prof. W. His and myself.

BURT G. WILDER.

SIASCONSET, MASS., August 3, 1896.

THE METRIC SYSTEM.

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: I was much interested in Mr. Stover's query, "Is not the country ripe enough to accept the metric system?" and wish to say that the practical difficulties are probably largely overestimated. Of all peoples those of the United States are the most adaptive, and the change would involve those who are best able to assimilate the new method.

*From a letter to me. Published as Aphorism xv. in the article 'Anatomical Terminology,' Reference Handbook of the Medical Sciences, VIII., 5:20, 1889.

†'Intermembral Homologies,' Boston Soc. Nat. Hist., Proceedings, XIV., 172, April 5, 1871.

As Greeley proclaimed about 1871, "The way to resume is to resume," so the way to adopt is to adopt. If those from whom the initiative must come would initiate, there would not be much trouble. Let all architects and builders write their dimensions in metric measures, and they will soon find them executed without trouble.

This company manufactures pulleys, etc. A few years ago we established an agency in France and our orders came in metric measures. We simply sent to Chicago for a metric scale and then filled the order. It did not cause any noticeable trouble. It is just as easy for the saw-mill man to cut his lumber according to one measure as the other, and in a short time he would become equally familiar with both systems, and *then* the metric system would be established. The same results would follow through all the trades, but the workman will not use the improvement until he is obliged to.

R. D. D. SMITH.

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SCIENTIFIC LITERATURE.

MATHEMATICAL PAPERS READ AT THE INTERNATIONAL MATHEMATICAL CONGRESS HELD IN CONNECTION WITH THE WORLD'S COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION, CHICAGO, 1893.

THE papers presented at the Chicago Mathematical Congress of 1893 have recently been issued in book form by Macmillan & Co., under the suggestive subtitle of Vol. I. of Papers Published by the American Mathematical Society. The papers are edited by the Committee of the Congress, Professors Moore, Bolza and Maschke, of the University of Chicago, and Prof. White, of Northwestern University. The committee were embarrassed at the outset by the fact that no financial provision had been made for the publication, which was finally made possible by the generous subscription of a guarantee fund of one thousand dollars by the Mathematical Society, its members individually and other mathematicians. The handsome volume before us reflects great credit on all concerned in its production.